



August 28, 2020

Honourable Leo A. Glavine
Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage
1741 Brunswick Street, 3rd Floor
Halifax, NS B3J 3X8

Minister Glavine:

COVID-19 has changed the way Nova Scotians live. And as the school year approaches, it will certainly affect the way Nova Scotia students learn. I am writing to you today, to ask you to ensure that students in rural Nova Scotia have the same chance as their counterparts in more urban areas to succeed.

Many post-secondary students will be learning remotely in the coming year. For some post-secondary students in Argyle-Barrington, online learning from home will not only be challenging, but nearly impossible due to poor and unreliable internet access. Unfortunately, there are students who may opt not to attend college or university this year due to the technology barrier.

Our public libraries could be a solution to rural students who do not have reliable internet at home. There are two public libraries in my constituency -- one in Pubnico, the other in Barrington. There are also libraries in Yarmouth and Shelburne which are both in neighbouring constituencies.

I know that your department provides funding for libraries and I am asking you to ensure they have the funding and the means to provide stable, reliable high-speed internet access to post-secondary students and other members of rural communities.

Access to high-speed internet is an essential service in the 21st century. The importance of the service is only amplified when in-person interactions are restricted by the pandemic.

We must do everything we can to make sure our students are not put at a competitive disadvantage because this basic service was out of reach.

I would be happy to discuss this important issue with you further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colton LeBlanc', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Colton LeBlanc, MLA
Argyle-Barrington

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